



Life Principles Notes™

Conviction vs. Condemnation

Summary:

How secure do you feel about your standing before God? Do you have a rock-solid assurance that, regardless of your sinful nature, you will spend eternity in the presence of God? Could it be instead that you struggle with doubts about your destiny after this life?

Some believers have trouble with this issue because they live by the inconsistency of their emotions. Facts are always more reliable than our feelings. The Bible offers you an eternal assurance that is crystal-clear. God intends for you to be

stable and steadfast in your faith.

Perhaps you feel condemned and convicted. Romans 8:2 says that “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.”

Key Passage: [Romans 8:1-2; 32-35](#)

Supporting Scripture: *John 16:7-8; Psalm 51:3-4; Luke 22:60-62; Acts 2:36-38; John 3:36; Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:30; Revelation 12:10; John 3:16-21; John 8:1-11; 1 Peter 2:24; Mark 16:6-7.*

Scriptural Principles:

1 The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sins.

What is the difference between condemnation and conviction? “There is now no more condemnation of those who are in Jesus Christ” (Romans 8:1). Jesus also assured us that He did not come into the world to condemn it but to save it. (John 3:17) Therefore Christians are free of condemnation, but conviction is another matter. The Holy Spirit comes to live in our hearts when we accept Christ as Lord. He awakens us to those things in our lives that are displeasing to God—this is called conviction. It is the Spirit of God nudging us to avoid sin and live in the way God intends us to live.

2 The Holy Spirit assures us of God’s approval.

Beyond conviction of daily sin, the Spirit of God does something else. He lets us know not only when we have done something wrong, but when we have done something right. He is delighted on those occasions when He fills us with the satisfaction of knowing we are being obedient. He reveals God’s approval, so that we can be encouraged that we have kept in step with the kind of life He wants us to lead. Therefore in every action we take, the Holy Spirit of God is guiding us to do what is right and pleasing to God.

3 The Holy Spirit speaks to unbelievers about their standing before God.

How, then, is the Spirit of God manifest in the life of an unbeliever? He convicts that person of sin, just as He does for the believer. He penetrates the heart and makes an unbeliever aware of impurities in action and attitude. However, the Holy Spirit’s primary focus is that individual’s standing before God. He reveals the lack of a relationship to Christ, and He makes people aware of their danger of judgment before Almighty God. His great goal is to bring every unbeliever to confession, repentance, and salvation through the acceptance of the death and Resurrection of God’s Son. His motivation is amazing love for every one of us.

4 The Holy Spirit speaks to believers about their relationship to Christ.

While the Holy Spirit deals with unbelievers on the basis of their eternal standing, He relates to Christians based on the intimate personal relationship we have with Christ. He convicts us of our sin and disobedience, and He encourages us toward living the Spirit-filled life. He convicts, but He never condemns. As we have seen in Romans 8, there is no condemnation whatsoever for those who have become children of God and adopted into His Kingdom. Our sins have been forgiven once and for all, so it is our conduct that is the Spirit's focus, not our eternal standing.

5 We are free of condemnation because we are “in Christ.”

Romans 8:2 tells us that there is no condemnation for those who are “in Christ.” What does that phrase mean? The Apostle Paul uses it frequently, and it refers to the eternal relationship we have with Christ. At the moment we are saved, we enjoy a new standing before God. It is a perfect standing that results from all our sin, past, present, and future, being forgiven once and for all. No behavior or conduct can have any effect on that relationship while we are in Christ, because this forgiveness is something God alone has done.

6 We are free of condemnation because we are sealed by the Holy Spirit.

Paul uses another important phrase about our new condition. He says we have been “sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise” (Ephesians 1:13). Not only are we in Christ, but we have been “sealed” there permanently at the moment of salvation. We have become children of God, and what He has done cannot be undone. The Spirit has come into our lives in the same way “earnest money” is offered at the time of sale in real estate—as a pledge of the final culmination of ownership. The Spirit is God's pledge that we now belong to Him, and that someday we will live with Him eternally.

7 We are not free to sin or to waste our lives.

The devil harasses us with feelings of condemnation, but those feelings are deceptions. Jesus has told us that He came into the world to save it rather than condemn it, and only if we reject Him will there be condemnation. Since you and I know that we enjoy that kind of eternal security, does it mean we are free to sin? Absolutely not. We are free to be accountable to Him, to serve Him, and to honor Him in every possible way. We are responsible to our God, and therefore we feel conviction rather than condemnation. As Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery, “Neither do I condemn you; Go your way. From now on sin no more” (John 8:11).

8 We can enjoy this freedom only when we accept the gift of eternal life.

My friend, there is nothing in this universe that is more wonderful than the assurance of eternal security that we can enjoy. That tremendous freedom is only available to us, however, when we accept His Lordship and salvation. Jesus Christ, God's only Son, has already paid the price for our sins, otherwise we would face the full condemnation of God's righteous wrath. All we need to do is to say yes to the Holy Spirit and receive Christ as our personal Savior. Only then can we enter into all the joy He wishes you and I to receive.

Conclusion:

Where is your standing before our loving Father? Do you know for a certainty that you have received His free gift? Have you accepted His forgiveness, been saved, redeemed, and are you being sanctified by the Lord each day?

If you are one of those people standing on the outside, wondering about Jesus Christ without receiving Him, I offer you this advice with all my heart. The wisest thing you can do is to lay

aside your arguments and doubts. Walk away from those entanglements that hold you back from God's love. You may not understand everything, but God will accept you just as you are. Believe in Him and this very moment you will be washed absolutely clean, free of condemnation, and in the midst of His awesome grace. ✝

Contact us:
1-800-789-1473

Customer Care
8:00 A.M.–10:00 P.M. | M-F (EST)

This and other Life Principles Notes are available to download at www.intouch.org
To learn more about *The Charles Stanley Institute for Christian Living* visit www.charlesstanleyinstitute.com